



January 2024

Quarter 3

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Tennessee Human Rights Commission Winter Updates

Agency Spotlight

The Tennessee Human Rights Commission is an independent state agency dedicated to educating the public and enforcing anti-discrimination laws in employment, housing,



and public accommodations. In the second quarter of the 2023-24 fiscal year, the Commission participated in various events throughout the state including the TN SHRM Conference & Exposition, the Celebrate Nashville Cultural Festival, and the National Civil Rights Museum's Freedom Awards. Below you can find more details on two events we hosted this past quarter: the Employment Law Seminar and the Tennessee Celebration of International Human Rights Day.



THRC Mission

Safeguarding individuals from discrimination through education and enforcement.



The **2023 Employment Law Seminar (ELS)** was an annual training the Commission organized, in partnership with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Tennessee Department of Human Resources (DOHR). The ELS took place on Thursday, October 12th and provided attorneys, human resource professionals, and others with the knowledge necessary to support the latest best practices in the workplace. The seminar featured experts in the field of employment law including Keynote Speaker, Fred Bissinger of FordHarrison.

Visit [here](#) for more information on the 2023 Employment Law Seminar.



The **Tennessee Celebration of International Human Rights Day** took place on Wednesday, December. The Celebration honored the 75th Anniversary of the International Declaration of Human Rights. The theme for the event was "Dignity, Justice, and Freedom For All". The event honored individuals across the state of Tennessee who advanced human rights in their communities including Lifetime Achievement Honoree, Ludye Wallace. The event was co-hosted by THRC in collaboration with TN United for Human Rights, the Metro Human Relations Commission, the United Nations Association of Nashville - Cordell Hull Chapter, and others.

For more details on the event, visit [here](#).

What's Going on in Civil Rights: Pregnant Worker's Fairness Act

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA)



went into effect on June 27, 2023. The PWFA requires that covered employers provide "reasonable accommodations" for employees with limitations due to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions.

The PWFA is enforced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). To learn more about the PWFA, you can visit the EEOC website [here](#).

In Tennessee, the Tennessee Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination based pregnancy status or related medical conditions. For more information on the THRA and maternity leave, visit [here](#).

Get to know THRC

Each newsletter we invite our readers to learn more about the people who make THRC run. For our inaugural "Get to Know THRC" interview, we're featuring our Chair of the Board of Commissioners, Darris K. Upton.

Question: Why did you join the Commission?

Chair Upton: Being on this Commission is an opportunity to serve my state. When reviewing cases, we can educate constituents on what the law is regarding discrimination, and things are little better than when we started.



As a Black veteran with disabilities from a small town, I have felt the sting of discrimination in my life. Hopefully, through our actions, others won't have to feel that sting in their lives.

Question: What do you hope to accomplish with the Commission?

Chair Upton: I look forward to working with my colleagues to bring resolution [to THRC cases]. We also look forward to supporting the training and outreach the staff at THRC do throughout the year. All of the Commissioners look forward to doing what we can to help THRC thrive.

Question: Any fun facts you'd like to share?

Chair Upton: I had the chance to get in the cockpit of an F-35... it's a really cool aircraft. I've also had the chance to meet three presidents. When I'm not working, I like to get lost in the woods.

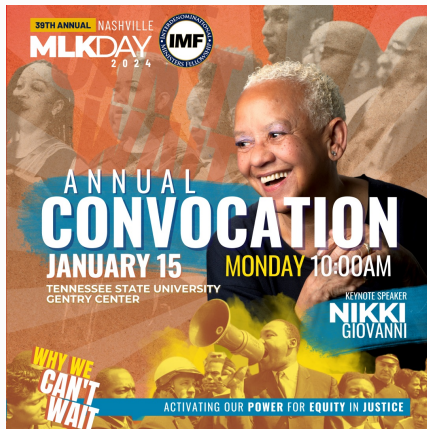
For more info on Chair Upton and the THRC Board of Commissioners, [visit here](#).



View our Annual Reports

The Tennessee Human Rights Commission published our 2022-2023 Annual Report and our Title VI Annual Report this quarter. The reports highlight the education and enforcement efforts of the Commission for the previous fiscal year.

To view our Annual Report and Title VI Report, please [visit here](#).



Upcoming Events

January 12: [IMF MLK Day Labor & Human Rights Breakfast](#). Nashville, TN.

January 15: [IMF MLK Day March & Convocation](#). Nashville, TN.

January 26: THRC Board of Commissioners Meeting. Nashville, TN.

February 29 - March 1: [THDA Tennessee Housing Conference](#). Nashville, TN.

March 22: THRC Board of Commissioners Meeting. Nashville, TN.

April 29: West TN Fair Housing Summit. Memphis, TN and Online.



Additional Resources

Federal Departments:

- [U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development](#)
- [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)

State Departments:

- [TN Department of Human Resources](#)
- [TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development](#)
- [TN Housing Development Agency](#)

Legal Aid Services:

- [Legal Aid of East TN](#)



- [Legal Aid Society of Middle TN & Cumberlands](#)
- [Memphis Area Legal Services](#)
- [West TN Legal Services](#)



Take our Survey!

Here at the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, we are looking to better understand the needs of our partners and constituents. [Please take this 5 minute survey!](#)

Participants will be entered in a raffle to win tickets to our West TN Fair Housing Summit!



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